

MAYOR OF LONDON

Stephen Knight AM
City Hall
The Queen's Walk
More London
London SE1 2AA

Our ref: MGLA200215-9743

Date: 16 APR 2015

Dear Stephen

Thank you for sending me a copy of the Environment Committee's new report 'Bag it or bin it? Managing London's domestic food waste'.

I find food waste abhorrent and during my time as Mayor of London I have been involved in many projects designed to either reduce food waste or capture it for beneficial use including: investing in two anaerobic digestion plants through the London Waste and Recycling Board (LWARB) and the London Green Fund, the Recycle for London Love Food Hate Waste campaign, Feeding the 5000 in Trafalgar Square, my biodiesel buses programme and not to forget the multi award winning Food Save project, which has just won a City of London Sustainable City Award.

Your report sets out a number of recommendations for me, the LWARB and the boroughs and I have set out below my responses to the recommendations directed at me.

Yours ever,



Boris Johnson
Mayor of London

MAYOR OF LONDON

Recommendation 2

The London Waste and Recycling Board (LWARB), in partnership with the GLA, Boroughs and the Waste and Resources Action Programme (WRAP) should improve data collection on food waste so that better projections of need and demand can be made, and the impact of food waste on London's overall recycling and landfill targets can be assessed. Annual food waste recycling statistics for local authorities should be made available on the London Data Store.

Good quality, frequent and comparable data is important for good plan making and programme development and you are right to point out that it is very hard to come by for all waste, let alone food waste. Basic food waste tonnage data is available where separate food waste collection systems are in place between boroughs and householders and my officers will work with LWARB and the boroughs to see how we are best to utilise this data. London borough data is also published at <http://laportal.wrap.org.uk/>.

Recommendation 3

The Mayor should join London Councils in its efforts to secure additional resources from the Government to develop separate food and organic waste collection services.

If London Councils would like my support in lobbying Government for additional funds for London, I am always happy to consider it.

Recommendation 4

Alongside government funding the Mayor should make available from his own resources ongoing funding for waste reduction and recycling programmes such as the Waste and Resources Action Programme (WRAP) or Recycle for London.

Should the London Waste and Recycling Board's (LWARB) self-financing capabilities not be sufficiently achieved, the Mayor should make a long-term commitment to protect LWARB's budget, thereby enabling LWARB to continue its programmes to support boroughs and successfully embed food waste recycling in their waste management strategies. This could be achieved, for example, by including funding for LWARB in the GLA budget plans through to 2018/19, or by entering into contracts with LWARB for funding in return for delivery.

My officers work very closely with LWARB to deliver the excellent value for money that the LWARB has become known for. As you know LWARB's aim is to become self-financing and my officers will do everything in their power to help LWARB achieve this aim.

Recommendation 5

In line with the London Finance Commission's calls that London government should be allowed to make additional self-determined investments in its own infrastructure, the Mayor should lobby the Government for the devolution of landfill tax to London.

I have already called for the devolution of Landfill tax to London in my London Infrastructure Plan.

Recommendation 7

The Mayor should work with LWARB and London Councils to introduce mechanisms for a consistent, London-wide approach to communication about food waste by April 2016. Collaboration with networks like the Association of London Cleansing Officers (ALCO) or the London Recycling Officers Group (LROG) as well as specialist organisations like the Waste and Resources Action Programme (WRAP) and Keep Britain Tidy would be beneficial.

MAYOR OF LONDON

My officers work closely with LWARB and through the new Resource London programme, LWARB, WRAP, London Councils and the GLA will be working with London boroughs on communication and service efficiency. My officers already also work closely with ALCO, LROC, KBT.

Recommendation 8

Design for housing development should enable waste minimisation and separation:

For new housing developments, the Mayor and Boroughs should use their planning and housing investment powers to 'design out waste', for example by prioritising funding for schemes that meet the highest levels of waste minimisation, and by promoting best practice for separating and recycling food waste. The proposed 2015 review of the Mayor's Housing Supplementary Planning Guidance should consider these ideas and also make particular reference to the requirements for food waste separation and storage.

GLA officers have been working with LWARB on advice for developers on providing sufficient containment and storage for recyclable, including food waste, and my Housing SPG sign posts this guidance.

For existing housing developments, the Mayor and LWARB should provide additional financial and technical support to waste collection authorities and community groups to retrofit alternative waste solutions, such as composting schemes or the removal of single stream waste chutes.

All additional funding for borough waste and recycling improvements will be made through LWARB.

Recommendation 9

In developing future asset management strategies, the Mayor should consider how he can utilise GLA land holdings to enable waste infrastructure and sustainable development, providing small and commercial-scale anaerobic digestion plants on these sites.

The London Sustainable Industries Park is being marketed for waste and resource management activity.

Recommendation 10

The Government should press for EU regulations to be changed, namely the Sludge Directive, to allow anaerobic digestion of sewage sludge and organic waste such as food waste alongside each other (co-treatment) and the Mayor should support this call.

I would support such a call.